

FLNB Board of Meeting Summary

October 10, 2012 – 2:00pm Eastern/1:00 pm Central
Tallahassee Division Bankruptcy Courthouse 2nd Floor Conference Room

Attendees

William Blevins, Traci Abrams, William Miller, Tracy Strom, Melissa McClure, Jeff Dollinger, Steve Jurnovoy, Bob Bruner, and Philip Bates

Updates re Old Business

Welcoming New Board Member

- Jeffrey Dollinger of Gainesville is our newest Board member volunteer. Jeff is an employee at Scruggs & Carmichael and has both Northern and Middle District of Florida Bankruptcy court experience. The Board member roster on the court's Internet site has been updated.

Newsletter Articles by Board Members

- Kathryn Hathaway's submission was published. She did a wonderful job!

FY2013 Budget Outlook

- If sequestration takes place on January 2, 2013, then the Judiciary will see a 20-30% cut in funding going forward resulting in reductions in service, furloughs and courthouse closings.

New Judge Karen K. Specie

- Discussion about her progress so far.

2012 Bankruptcy Paralegal and Assistants Seminar Success

- Posting of Judge Specie's "Dos and Don'ts" list to Internet site. Draft format under review.
- Future format options (multi- vs. single-location, date proximity to larger Bar seminar, CLE credit options, etc.)
 - Options for increasing attendance include offering the event in more locations or utilizing WebEx to allow participants to attend via Webinar.
 - Julie Gibson inquired with the Florida Bar and learned that CLE accreditation is only offered for programs that are primarily designed for attorneys. Future programs may be adjusted accordingly with paralegals and support staff strongly encouraged to attend.
 - Feedback included a request for more information specifically for creditors. A separate program may be created for that purpose and may be offered in a Webinar format.

New Business

New Function of the Board

- The Board will act as the official conduit through which the ideas of the Bar may be submitted, vetted and ultimately provided to Judge Specie for her review and consideration. The goal of this new function is to create a streamlined and efficient way for Judge Specie to receive “packaged” proposals.
- Board members will actively solicit input (e.g., agenda items, ideas, feedback, etc.) from their peers as part of this new function. The Clerk’s Office will send a reminder email to the Board two weeks prior to each meeting so that Board members can plan to report the information they have received during the next meeting.
- The Clerk’s Office will send out an email to our attorneys explaining this new role and reminding users of the “Topic Request Form” link available on the court’s Website. Articles will be included in the Bankruptcy Advisor newsletters notifying the public of Board activities.

Membership Renewals or Replacements

- Members with terms expiring this year include: Bill Miller, Tracy Strom, Philip Bates, and Steve Jurovoy.
- Membership terms for Tracy Strom, Philip Bates, and Steve Jurovoy will be extended through 2013. Bill Miller will contact the Clerk’s Office at a later date regarding his membership.

Newsletter Article by Board Members

- Traci Abrams will write the next article for the November/December edition explaining the new function of the Board.

FLMB Negative Notice Rule Discussion and Possible Adoption by the FLNB (Dollinger)

- Jeff Dollinger explained how Florida Middle Bankruptcy Court’s negative notice process works including the structure of their listing of motions subject to negative noticing rules on their Website.
- Bill Miller had already been asked by Judge Specie to research Florida Middle’s plan.
- Florida Northern’s Local Rule is identical to Florida Middle’s except in the number and type of motions.
- The plan is to refer this matter to the Local Rules Committee once formed to look at the pros and cons related to the addition of certain motions to the list. Some of the questions voiced during the meeting included:
 - How will the negative notice process impact pro se filers?
 - Will creditors be at a disadvantage if they are unsure of what they are reading?
 - Should negative notice be a requirement or a voluntary option?

Chapter 13 Streamlining Recommendations Requested

- Ad Hoc Committee – The Board suggested contacting Kathryn Hathaway to lead an ad hoc committee designed to review the Chapter 13 process and suggest improvements. Several names were mentioned as possible committee members. Traci Abrams to follow up with them.

Formulation of a Formal Local Rules Committee

- Create a standing Local Rules committee managed by the Bar. Judge Specie and the Clerk’s Office would provide consultation. Discussions will be held with the Bar regarding this idea.

Proposed Orders Requirements

- The guidelines will be posted to the Internet site but are already available through the proposed order program. [Addendum: The guidelines are now available at

http://www.flnb.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/filing_requirements/4-inst.pdf and are also available through links located in the “Online Filing” and “Filing Requirements” drop-down menus.]

New guidelines for voluminous Motions for Summary Judgments and Responses

- Effective 11/1/2012
- The new rules will be added to the Local Rules through the next revision process.

2013 Hearing Date adjustments

- Judge Specie may compact her hearing schedule to make the process more efficient and intuitive. A draft plan will be communicated to the Bar for feedback.

New law clerk and continuance of request for new judgeship

- A second Law Clerk has been approved for our District through 10/1/2013.
- The FLNB qualifies for a renewed request for a temporary judgeship in Pensacola.

FY2014 Budget Outlook

- FY13 puts our court at FY08 funding levels.
- The end of FY15 will reduce our court to FY06 levels if all things remain the same.

Mortgage Modification

- Judge Specie has requested Bill Miller and the Bar to investigate a mortgage modification program and to inquire with the Middle District of Florida about how their program operates.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, January 8, 2013 at 1:30 p.m. ET